



CLAYTON EARLY LEARNING

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Environment Rating Scales Training System

# **ERS Guidelines - Certification**

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## Overview

### Why Commit to the Process?

#### Ensuring Meaningful Scores in the Use of the Environment Rating Scales

The commitment to improving quality care for children in Colorado has spurred the use of the Environment Rating Scales developed by *The University of North Carolina, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center*. The rating scales, the ECERS-R (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised), ECERS-3 (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Third Edition) ITERS-R (Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised), ITERS-3 (Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Third Edition), FCCERS-R (Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised), and SACERS-U (School Age Care Environment Rating Scale), can be used for a variety of quality improvement purposes.

The instruments are useful as self-assessments, but it is critical that such scores are not used in the place of “reliable” scores. When using the scales for research or evaluation, (i.e., using scores for differential reimbursement or using scores to evaluate programs and providers), it is **IMPERATIVE** that assessors doing observations are either “certified” or “reliable” and that they maintain their certification or reliability with the State Core Team. For reliable assessors, this means that they maintain inter-rater reliability which is the process of checking practical observation scores against other trained evaluators to ensure consistency in rating.

*By making a commitment to reliability, the early care and education community develops meaningful data to track quality improvement. This provides the state legislature, county commissioners, funders, and others a concrete description of early childhood education in Colorado.*

The State Core Team from Clayton Early Learning works closely with the authors of the scales to develop both a certified and a reliable system of evaluators across Colorado.

This document describes the process of building a base of both certified and reliable community evaluators.

## What is the Process?

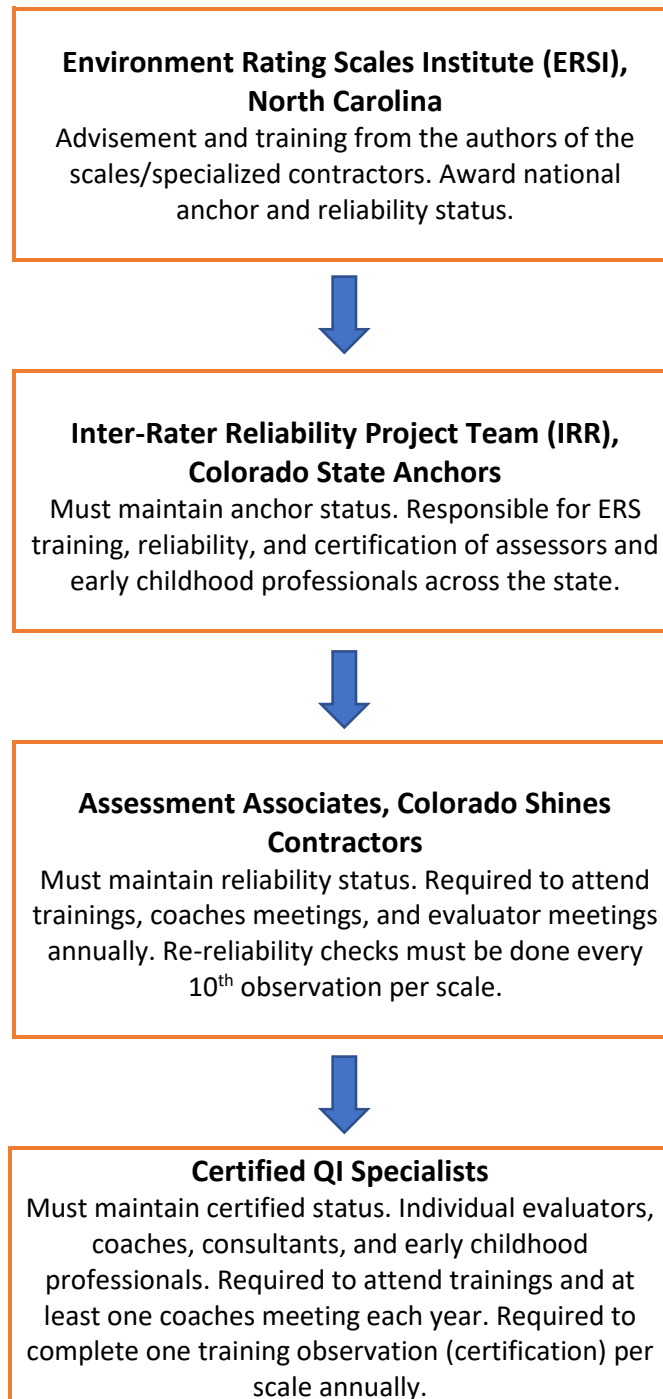
### Determine the Need

1. Which of the scale(s), i.e., the ECERS-R, ECERS-3, ITERS-R, ITERS-3, FCCERS-R, and SACERS-U meet the current needs of your quality improvement project?
2. How do you want to use the scales? Do you want to shape training and staff development based on findings from the observation? Do you want to collect data on the current quality of early care and education and track changes over time? Do you want to target grant monies to identified needs determined by the assessments? Do you want to determine the impact on quality of a specific intervention? Are you a part of the Colorado Quality Rating Improvement System, Colorado Shines?
3. Who do you want to evaluate (e.g., all classrooms in certain programs, a sample of classrooms from programs involved in a specific intervention, etc.)?
4. How many times a year do you want to evaluate classrooms?
5. How many classrooms are you planning to evaluate?

### Develop Information Protocols

1. Identify a primary contact to maintain communication with Clayton and serve as the local data and evaluation manager. In many instances, a person in your community will have already been identified. To find out if there is an existing contact and how to reach them, please contact the Clayton office.
2. Determine a set of evaluation protocols accepted by all partners in the evaluation process (e.g., funders, administrators, evaluators, programs, etc.). Evaluation Protocols include policies on conflict of interest, confidentiality, and data dissemination (who sees what and when including reports and aggregate data).
3. Formalize a process for cleaning data and tracking all pertinent paperwork. This includes the use of the *Classroom Information Form* (page 20) and identifying a data coordinator.

## Colorado Reliability and Certification Structure



## Clayton's Inter-Rater Reliability Team

The Inter-Rater Reliability Core Team, part of the Research and Evaluation Department at Clayton Early Learning forms the base of reliability in the state of Colorado. IRR Team staff are highly-trained evaluators who develop (with input from the field and ERSI) the certification/reliability policies and guidelines. They also are the lead trainers on the Environment Rating Scales for the state. The IRR Team participates in annual training with the Environment Rating Scales Institute (ERSI) including the authors of the scales, or their highly trained contractors in North Carolina to ensure that the policies and intent of the instruments are followed in Colorado and to maintain their anchor status. The IRR Team is responsible for the training and certification/reliability for evaluators in Colorado.

To maintain reliability with ERSI in North Carolina, every member of Clayton's IRR Core Team will travel to Chapel Hill (or have ERSI come to Colorado) at a minimum of once per year to have their reliability checked. However, in attempts to be economical, only one scale has typically been completed per reliability session with ERSI, thus it may take several years for all IRR project staff to become officially reliable on all rating scales used in the state. To help with this process, each member of the Inter-Rater Reliability Team will have their reliability checked on a different scale so that someone will be reliable with the ERSI Team on a particular scale. Additionally, the team completes a rigorous internal reliability process that mirrors ERSI's so that each team member is reliable on each scale and completes frequent reliability checks throughout the year.

## Certified Quality Improvement (QI) Specialists

Certified QI Specialists are primarily individuals who evaluate, coach, or provide technical assistance services to programs under the early childhood collaboratives such as the Early Childhood Councils to inform quality improvement work in child care in their region – **not as an accountability mechanism**. Evaluators at this level are considered “certified” and must meet the following requirements:

1. Be employees or consultants for an independent organization (e.g., for an Early Childhood Council, school district that is planning on using the Environment Rating Scales to inform quality improvement in their region. If teachers or administrators would like to go through the certification process to support their program prior to their official Colorado Shines Rating, they are welcome to do so.
2. Complete a full day training provided by Clayton Early Learning on each Environment Rating Scale that they will be using prior to scheduling certification with the IRR Team. An online option is also available in place of the face to face training, please see the *Certification FAQ* on page 17 for more information. Check Clayton's website (<https://www.claytonearlylearning.org/>) for the training schedules. This training will not need to be repeated unless certification expires.
3. Complete the Cultural Competency training provided by Clayton Early Learning prior to scheduling certification with the IRR Team. Check Clayton's website (<https://www.claytonearlylearning.org/>) for the training schedules. This training will not need to be repeated unless certification expires.
4. After certification is obtained, certified QI specialists are required to attend at least one Coaches Meeting facilitated by Clayton annually.

After the required trainings are completed, QI specialists are to contact the Clayton IRR Team at [ERScheduling@claytonearlylearning.org](mailto:ERScheduling@claytonearlylearning.org) to schedule their certification. Please allow two months' notice for scheduling (e.g., request for a certification in August should be made in June) when possible. In your email request, please include the name of the scale you would like to become certified in, the month you wish to schedule, if you have a site to use for the observation or if you need a site, and your contact information including your mobile number for contact while traveling to the observation if needed. We *strongly discourage* observing at a program you are coaching at, or that you are a direct supervisor or staff member in to ensure you are able to observe without bias or distraction. After you have received scheduling confirmation, you are ready to begin the certification process explained below:

1. It is *highly recommended* that the evaluator completes at least one practice observation on their own prior to doing their certification observation with one of Clayton's IRR team members, please see *Preparing for Your Observation* on page 12 for more information.
2. Complete one training observation/certification on each scale with one of Clayton's IRR team members. This observation is merely for the Clayton's IRR Team to discuss what needs to be looked at in the classroom, ensure that scoring is done correctly, and to discuss other aspects of the instrument that may not be covered in training. This is not a "reliability" observation where 85% reliability within one must be achieved with Clayton's IRR Team member. However, for certification the evaluator must achieve a minimum score of 75%. If the evaluator score is below the 75%, certification *will not* be awarded and a second observation will need to be scheduled with an IRR Team member.
3. To finish certification, the evaluator must also write a feedback report for the classroom/home they observed. This feedback report must include strengths and recommendations using the language from the scale. A report template, sample report, and report text will be given to the evaluator to help complete the report. Once the report is completed, the evaluator will send the report to the IRR Team member with whom they observed. The IRR Team member will edit the report and provide feedback. He/she will then send the report to the evaluator to make suggested changes. The final version must be turned in to the IRR Team.
4. Once the training, observation, and report are completed, the evaluator is considered to be a "certified" evaluator if they passed with 75% or higher and will receive an electronic certificate from Clayton showing their certified status.
5. Evaluators must re-check their certification once a year per instrument regardless of how many observations they complete during that year. This re-check must be done with Clayton's IRR Team. If Clayton has no record of a re-check on certification, the certification status is considered expired. If a certification has lapsed, all initial training must be taken again to obtain certification again.
6. Please also see the *Certification FAQ* on page 17 for more information.



## Certification Procedures

### Steps for Conducting Certification

- Observe together with your IRR Team member for approximately three hours
- Interview questions should be asked at the end of the observation if it is convenient for the teacher. The person achieving their certification should plan on conducting the interview to support learning of how to ask questions in a non-leading and time conscious manner. If the teacher is not available for questions at that time, the IRR Team member will role-play as the teacher
- After the observation, the observers will go to another location to score based on what they saw in the classroom
- The IRR Team member will make sure that:
  1. The evaluator/person becoming certified does not have any other questions
  2. Big concepts such as Substantial Portion of the Day or Much of the Day are discussed in depth for understanding
  3. The scores are correctly circled by the evaluator
- Complete the reliability sheet (the IRR Team member does this)
  1. Completely fill out the top part of the Reliability form. Indicate on the top of the page that it is a “certification”
  2. Write the observer initials consecutively going to the right across the top row of the reliability sheet with the IRR observer’s initial written first
  3. Going down the column of each observers’ initial, have each observer give all their scores for each item scored. Write all the scores down the appropriate column for each person. The core evaluator scores should be entered last even though they have their initials in the first column
- Compare the item scores one at a time. Circle or mark the item number if the scores differ by more than one point (e.g., 4 and 6). If there are three or more people attempting reliability, all three scores need to be within one point. You cannot have two people more than one point apart even in a group of three, (e.g., a score of 3 from one observer, 4 from another, and 5 from the last, for example, need to be discussed for consensus). Use this process for all of the items needing to be discussed for consensus
- Once the scores have been looked over, the IRR Team member will go over item by item scores and indicator scores and discuss any scores or indicators that differ

Decide on a consensus score:

- For those scores that fall more than one point apart, a discussion must take place to try and establish what the true score is. This is a chance for raters to explain their scores; it is NOT meant to be a compromise OR a contest for being “right.” The goal is to have a consensus on the true score to provide the best information to programs and providers
- Once a consensus score has been established, write it in the consensus column. It may also be helpful for observers to put a triangle around the consensus score on their scoresheet and circle the indicators that should change/were discussed to reflect that score so they can go back and correct it later
- To calculate reliability, count the total number of items scored (including N/A items) and write this in the total number of items scored line at the end of the reliability sheet. For example, 37
  1. Add the number of circled items in each person’s column and subtract that number from the total number of items scored. For example, 4 circled items in one person’s column, subtracted from 37 = 33. Write this number on the Total Score line that is above the Total Number of Items Scored
  2. Divide a person’s total score (e.g., 33) by the total number of items scored (e.g., 37). This gives you a number that you then multiply by 100 to get the percentage for reliability (e.g., 33 divided by 37 = .891 X 100 = 89.1%). Scores are not rounded up
- Remember that 85% reliability does not need to be achieved for certification. If the evaluator scores below 75%, certification will not be obtained and the evaluator will need to schedule another observation
- After the scoring discussion and a reliability score is calculated, the IRR team member will ensure that the certified evaluator knows how to calculate the sub-scale and overall scores correctly. They will also go over the report writing process and will ensure that the certified evaluator receives a copy of the report template, sample report, and standard text for the scale used

## Costs Associated with Becoming Certified

### Training Costs

Training for new QI Specialists and others interested in learning more about the Environment Rating Scales: The trainings are for someone who has never been trained, who was trained more than two years ago and did not peruse certification after training, or for someone whose certification has lapsed/expired. Required trainings and information:

- Attend a 1.0 day training on the Environment Rating Scale desired, cost is \$160.00 per person

Training description: **ECERS-R™, ECERS-3™, ITERS-R™, ITERS-3™, FCCERS-R™, and SACERS-U™ Full Day** These courses are an in-depth study of the Environment Rating Scale (ERS) of your choice, these scales were created to assess classrooms using a seven point scale, from inadequate to excellent levels. During these courses, we discuss the interpretation of specific indicators, the research and rationale for the requirements, and how the scales are currently used for the Colorado Shines rating system. Each course will have practice video observations, hands-on activities, and will provide suggestions on how to meet the scale's criteria in different classroom/family home settings. Participants will gain a deep understanding of the scale and develop the skills necessary to complete an observation as part of their certification process. Materials provided: Copy of the Environment Rating Scale and Clayton Training Binder.

- Attend a 1.0 day Cultural Competency training related to the use of the ERS tools, cost is \$110.00 per person

Training description: **Cultural Competency and the Environment Rating Scales**

This course examines how biases can affect your everyday life as well as how we look at early childhood classrooms. During this course, participants will introduce themselves culturally, will experience a safe space to share their own experiences, and will be part of small group discussion topics that will help them understand why we are biased, identify stereotypes, and recognize their own biases and how they impact their work and classroom assessment. This course is a requirement to become certified on any of the Environment Rating Scales. Materials provided: Various handouts.

- Attendance at one 0.5 day Coaches Meeting during the year, no cost

Meeting description: Several departments at Clayton Early Learning, along with outside partners collaborate to provide these meetings to the community. Meetings are designed for coaches, certified observers, and other interested early childhood professionals to provide the latest information about the field of early childhood in Colorado, the Environment Rating Scales, and Colorado Shines rating system. The participants will get to network with each other and meet other early childhood professionals from across Colorado. This meeting is offered twice a year once in the fall and once in late spring.

Total training cost for new QI specialists is \$270.00 for one scale, plus an additional \$160.00 for training on additional scales, if applicable.

## Certification Costs

### Initial Certification

After the evaluator has completed the training requirements they are then ready to do their certification observation. This certification observation is a one day training observation per scale, cost is \$280.00 per evaluator per scale (additional travel costs may apply).

### Re-Certification

A yearly re-certification check is required to maintain the evaluator's "Certified" status. This certification observation is a one day training observation per scale following the same process as the initial certification, cost is \$280.00 per evaluator per scale (additional travel costs may apply).

Total training and certification cost for new QI specialists for one scale is \$550.00 (additional travel costs may apply).

## Preparing for Your Observation

Before each observation, whether it is your certification observation or one you are conducting to support a program you are coaching, a teacher you are mentoring, a research project you have started, etc., below are best practices for how to prepare:

1. Read your scale entirely the day before the observation
2. Print your scoresheet from the "Supplementary Materials" section for the correct scale on ERSI's website: <https://www.ersi.info/index.html>
3. Review and print any additional supplementary materials needed (USDA guidelines, etc.)
4. Add any prompts to your scoresheet that may help you during the observation
5. Print copies of the questions for the teacher interview after the observation (if observing using the revised ("R") versions of the scales)
6. Ensure the most recent notes for clarification are in your scale, notes for clarification can be found on Clayton's website (<https://www.claytonearlylearning.org/>) under Research and Evaluation

Additional materials you will need for your observation:

1. Pencil (and extras)
2. Pencil lead (and extras)
3. Meat thermometer
4. Tape measure
5. Cushioning probe
6. Choke tube (if children under 3 years old will be present)
7. Clipboard (recommended)

Please note items 3 – 6 can be shared with your IRR Team member on the day of certification if you are unable to get these items prior to your certification.

## Classroom Observation Guidelines

- Please do not leave tote bags or purses within reach of children. Carry all personal possessions with you unless you are provided a safe place (locked cabinet/closet) to store them at the program. You may want to keep most of them in your locked car. If you have a jacket, ask the teachers where you can store it. Personal items could contain safety hazards
- Do not bring food or drink into the classroom. Children have all kinds of allergies at this young age and you never know if something you bring could cause a child a serious, if not life-threatening reaction. If you must bring a drink, water is acceptable, but must stay out of the reach of children at all times
- Please use the restroom before you start your observation. You cannot leave the classroom to use the restroom, because you may miss important interactions and language

### When you arrive:

- Arrive on time. If you are visiting for a certification, *be sure to wait to enter the classroom* with your IRR Team member
- Introduce yourself to program staff, the purpose for your visit, and sign-in. The program will direct you to the classroom you are observing in
- Introduce yourself to classroom staff, explain why you are there, and provide a few details about what they can expect during your visit
- Ask where a good place to wash hand is (some classrooms have different sinks for handwashing and food preparation, so it is always good to ask their preference)
- Ask the initial questions needed to conduct the observation from your scoresheet (number of children who normally attend, if there are allergies or special dietary restrictions, if there are children who have IEP's or IFSP's, the birthdates of the youngest and oldest, etc.)
- Explain that you are there to see what the children experience and then ask for permission to look through materials and areas that are accessible to children.
- Wash your hands following the correct procedures, which include: Wetting your hands with warm, running water first, getting soap, lathering your hands together *outside of the water stream* for 20 seconds, rinse hands, dry with a paper towel, turn off faucet with paper towel, throw paper towel away. Anytime you go into a classroom to be part of that classroom you need to wash your hands
- Remind them that you will have questions at the end of the observation (if observing using the revised ("R") versions of the scales)

As you observe:

- Teachers will be involved with the children during the visit and should not be asked to talk with you during activities with the children. The only time you should talk to the teacher is when you first arrive. If he/she is busy at arrival (in the middle of a lesson or group time), wait until he/she is not directly leading a lesson to introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the visit.
- Observers should not interfere with the classroom activities in any way. Please be as unobtrusive as possible. Please move if you are in the way of teachers or children.
- Try to keep a neutral facial expression so children and/or staff are neither drawn to you nor concerned about your response to them. However, it is important to present a pleasant demeanor as much as possible
- You may acknowledge children if they approach you, but do not otherwise take part in classroom activity. You can tell children something like: “I’m here to see all the great things you do in your classroom” or “I am only here to watch and do my work,” and redirect them towards their teachers
- You may sit in a chair so children are not intimidated by your height. Please do not sit on other furniture such as shelves, tables, the children’s chairs near an activity table, or on play equipment
- Please do not look through drawers, in cabinets, or other closed spaces without first getting the teacher’s permission
- Everything you see and hear is confidential. Do not repeat anything about the staff, children, or facility that could be traced back to your observation. In small towns, it may be wise to meet privately to discuss reliability rather than at a public location (e.g., a restaurant)
- Observers should station themselves around the perimeter of the classroom as unobtrusively as possible. You may walk around the perimeter to get a better vantage point during the observation. If you are observing with another person or a group, you should look through materials together as much as possible and move indoors and outdoors together
- When observing in a group, please refrain from talking to other observers when you are in the classroom. Take notes on a pad and/or your scoresheet to help in scoring and forming questions

### At the end of the observation:

- Conduct the question session using the questions in this document (questions are also found in the scales) and be sure to write down the answers
- Questions should be conducted in a personal and time conscious manner. The way you ask questions will be refined as you acquire more experience. However, keep in mind that questions requiring more than a yes or no response should always be asked open-ended. Be sure to ask about anything you did not observe that you need to know in order to score all of the items and indicators, and when you ask your questions, be specific and use language from the scale

## How to Calculate Scores

Be sure all the appropriate indicators in an item are checked (including N/A indicators) and that all items have the correct circled score. Remember the 50% rule! See your scale for specific scoring guidelines.

For each **sub-scale** (e.g., Space and Furnishings) of the scale, add the scores of each item; then add the number of items that were scored in the sub-scale. There is a space to do this at the end of each sub-scale within the scoresheet.

Divide the total of the scores in each sub-scale by the total number of items scored in that sub-scale.

This gives you the average score for each sub-scale.

### To obtain an overall average score:

Add the total scores of each of the sub-scales together; put this sum in the appropriate place on the last page of each scoresheet.

Add the total number of items scored in each sub-scale and put this sum in the appropriate place on the last page of the scoresheet.

Divide the total of all sub-scale scores by the total of all items scored. This gives you the overall average score.

**IMPORTANT!** Best practice is to have someone double check your scoresheet to ensure that all items are scored thoroughly and accurately, and that the totals of your sub-scales and the overall average total have been calculated correctly. With so many items, it is easy to make a mistake and all work should be checked.

## Evaluator Policies

### Confidentiality

All information concerning programs, program staff, and data records is considered confidential. Evaluators are not permitted to share or disclose any information about a program or talk about a program in any way that will make their identity known to anyone other than those who need to know (e.g., your IRR Team member that observed with you). No information is to be released without appropriate authorization from the program. All physical records (e.g., scoresheets and the inter-rater reliability sheet) of the observation are stored in locked spaces on the Clayton campus and are archived and destroyed at a later date. All electronic files (e.g., the classroom report) are stored in secure electronic locations and destroyed.

### Reporting Child Abuse

**In accordance with the Colorado Children's Code Statute, evaluators are mandatory reporters and shall report to the Department of Social Services, child protective services, or the police any instance where there is reasonable cause to believe that child abuse, neglect, or exploitation may have occurred.**

*Note: The individual who suspects the abuse is legally responsible for making certain that the report is made to the designated agencies immediately. This legal responsibility is not satisfied by merely reporting your suspicion to other internal personnel.*

When there is a suspicion of child abuse or neglect, evaluators should:

1. Avoid confrontation with the involved staff member
2. Immediately stop the observation
3. Notify the Director or the designee on-site that a call is being made to the child abuse and neglect hotline and ask him/her to go to the classroom (centers only)
4. Leave the program
5. Report the case of abuse or neglect to the hotline number immediately witnessing the incident at 1-844-CO-4-KIDS
6. If acting on Clayton business/part of a Clayton service, type up a narrative about the incident for Clayton's records

When a questionable behavior or interaction that may represent potential harm to a child is witnessed, evaluators should:

1. Avoid confrontation with the involved staff member
2. Continue the observation
3. Take detailed, objective notes about the specific behavior/interaction, including quotes of any inappropriate verbal interaction between the adult/staff member and the child
4. Notify the Director or designee about the situation prior to leaving the program in order for the Director to resolve the issue (centers only)
5. If acting on Clayton business/part of a Clayton service, type up a narrative about the incident for Clayton's records



## Certification FAQ

### What is a certification?

Certification on an Environment Rating Scale (ERS) is a way to demonstrate a depth of knowledge on an ERS scale. Anyone is able to become certified. The actual certification is a paper certificate signed by an Inter-Rater Reliability (IRR) Team member declaring certification on that scale.

### What are the benefits to certification?

Certification on an ERS scale demonstrates a level of understanding on the scale that cannot be achieved through a training alone. The live observation is an opportunity to ask questions and be mentored by a Clayton IRR Team member who obtains reliability each year with the authors (ERSI) of the Environmental Rating Scales.

### What are the requirements?

To receive an ECERS-R, ECERS-3, ITERS-R, ITERS-3, FCCERS-R, or SACERS-U certificate, one must attend a Clayton facilitated full day training based on the scale one wishes to become certified on. In addition, one must attend the Clayton facilitated Cultural Competency training. If you were unable to complete the most recent Cultural Competency training, and would like to sign up for the next one, please email me or [ERScheduling@claytonearlylearning.org](mailto:ERScheduling@claytonearlylearning.org) for information regarding future training dates.

### How much does certification cost?

Certification costs \$280.00 for local counties. If you would like one of our team members to travel to your county (if it is not in the Denver Metro area), we will send you a cost estimate with travel costs included.

### Are there any alternatives to the live Clayton conducted trainings?

For the Environment Rating Scales, you may purchase and complete an online training from ERSI, information and registration found here: <https://www.ersi.info/ersi/training.jsp>. Please provide Clayton with proof of training completion prior to becoming certified. For Cultural Competency, there is not alternative for a live Clayton conducted training.

### What does a certification day consist of?

On the day of certification, you will meet with a member of the Clayton IRR team at a predetermined time, at a predetermined location. You and your team member will do a live, three-hour observation utilizing the ERS scoresheet and scale. Following the observation, you and your team member will find a quiet place to score your observation (usually a restaurant or office). You will then compare scores to ensure a solid understanding of the ERS scale that was used. Plan for a full eight hour day for certification (although sometimes you may finish sooner). Please note, this process is intended to be a learning opportunity, thus, questions and discussions are encouraged throughout the observation and during the scoring portion afterwards.

### Are there any other steps?

Following the scoring portion of the certification, a feedback report will be written and delivered to the program that was observed. Your IRR Team member will send you a report template and a sample report to assist in this process, and walk you through writing of the report. The report will consist of strengths and areas of improvement noted during the observation. After you have completed the report, you will send it to your Clayton IRR Team member for edits. Reports are due two weeks after the

observation and will be returned to you anywhere from 2 weeks- 1 month after the observation. If a report is needed sooner, please make that request with your IRR Team member. Once a report is edited and finalized, you will receive your official ERS Certificate; certifying you for one year.

**Where do these observations occur?**

If there is a site you know would like to receive the feedback, we would be happy to oblige observing at a site of your choosing. If you would like assistance finding a site, we are happy to help locate a local site as well. We strongly encourage you to observe at a program you are not a direct supervisor or staff member in, to ensure you are able to take a non-biased approach to observing.

**Will I receive credit with PDIS?**

In addition to the training hours clocked during the trainings themselves, these certifications will each earn two points in the PDIS. Users can earn points for each ERS certification they have.

These points are mapped under Professional Development. 15 points under Professional Development come from standard clock hour trainings. The remaining 15 points must be earned through certifications or trainings that must meet a higher criteria, such as ERS certification.

**What are my next steps?**

To schedule a certification, please email [ERScheduling@claytonearlylearning.org](mailto:ERScheduling@claytonearlylearning.org). Please include your name, which scales you wish to certify on, your timeframe for your certification, and where you are planning on certifying (or if you need help finding a location). We typically are booked out two months in advance, so please try and plan ahead to schedule as soon as you can. If you are about to expire and are ready to re-certify, please also contact us at the email above two months prior to your expiration month.

## Additional Forms

### Scoresheet Checklist (sample)

Please complete for each scoresheet/observation.

Rating Scale (circle one):      ECERS-R      ECERS-3      ITERS-R      ITERS-3  
    FCCERS-R      SACERS-U

Observer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Observation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you:

	Rechecked the scores on the scoresheet?
	Recalculated each subscale score?
	Recalculated the number of items scored?
	Taken into account all items that were scored N/A?
	Calculated the overall average using the total scores?
	Listed the overall average scores on the scoresheet and report?
	Rechecked the report scores to ensure they match the scoresheet?
	Ensured that all strength and recommendations are consistent with the narrative of the report and matches the indicators marked on the scoresheet?
	Read the report for grammatical errors?

## Classroom Information Form (sample)

Please fill out one form for each classroom

**Center Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Classroom:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Fax:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Teachers Names:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Classroom Hours:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Observation Start Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

Ages of the children (majority): \_\_\_\_\_

Scale: ECERS-R      ECERS-3      ITERS-R      ITERS-3      FCCERS-R      SACERS-U

No observation Dates (field trips, special guests, vacation, teacher training, etc.)

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Please signify if the physical location or teacher has changed since your last rating scale assessment. This data is imperative for research tracking.

- ☐ No previous assessment
- ☐ Physical location change-Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Classroom name change-Please list previous: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Classroom teacher change-Please list previous: \_\_\_\_\_

## Confidentiality Statement (sample)

The commitment to improving quality care for children in Colorado has spurred the use of the Environment Rating Scales developed by *The University of North Carolina, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center*. The rating scales used by Clayton Early Learning are; the ECERS-R (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised); the ECERS-3 (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Third Edition); the ITERS-R (Infant/Toddler Environment Rating-Revised); the ITERS-3 (Infant/Toddler Environment Rating-Third Edition); the FCCERS-R (Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised) and the SACERS-U (School Age Care Environment Rating Scale-Updated).

This same commitment to improve quality care for children and the commitment to the highest level of professionalism in the field of early care, education, and family support, require that all rating scale evaluators who are certified or reliable with, or in any way work with the Environment Rating Scales, pledge to a commitment of confidentiality.

Pledge: As an Observer/Evaluator working with \_\_\_\_\_, I will maintain confidentiality regarding my observations and scores obtained using the rating scales. I will also keep confidential program/provider names, subsequent reports, and other relevant information obtained on behalf of the program or provider confidential.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Observer/Evaluator  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Observer/Evaluator Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Project Coordinator  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Project Coordinator Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Conflict of Interest Statement (sample)

### Environment Rating Scale Observers

A commitment to improve quality care for children and the commitment to the highest level of professionalism in the field of early care, education, and family support, requires that all rating scale evaluators who are reliable with, or in any way work with the Environment Rating Scales, pledge to reveal all historical or current relationships with centers, homes, and staff evaluated. It is imperative that rating scale evaluations used for research or evaluations (e.g., using scores for differential reimbursement or using scores to judge or rate centers) ensure there are no conflicts of interest or any relationship that could appear to be a conflict of interest are completed by an outside, non-biased evaluator.

Pledge: As a rating scale evaluator for the \_\_\_\_\_, I agree to divulge any conflict of interest with \_\_\_\_\_. Conflicts can include any prior relationship within the past three years with the individuals (including children) connected with the organizations being evaluated, or the organizations themselves.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Observer/Evaluator  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Observer/Evaluator Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Project Coordinator  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Project Coordinator Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Program or Provider Communication (sample)

**Thank you for your commitment to quality improvement. We hope that you find this process beneficial. You are helping to form a foundation upon which families can provide positive growth experiences for their children. It is our pleasure to play a small part in this process.**

### What to Expect From Evaluators during a Certified Training Observation

**Scheduling:** In most circumstances, the evaluator will call you directly to schedule a day for observation. It is important to schedule an observation on a “typical day.” This means typical staffing patterns and schedule.

**Time:** Expect the evaluators to be at your center/home a minimum of three hours. In full-day programs, the visit will last until children are put down for nap. In infant programs, the time of observation may be slightly less than three hours. In part-day programs, we will most likely be there during one entire session unless it is over 3 hours. The evaluator must see several arrivals or departures. In family homes, observations will start no earlier than 8:30 a.m.

**Certified Observation:** During a certified observation, there will be two evaluators who will be doing the observation. One evaluator is the Inter-Rater Reliability Team Member from Clayton Early Learning’s Research and Evaluation Department and the other person is an evaluator that is learning how to use the Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-R, ECERS-3, ITERS-R, ITERS-3, FCCERS-R, or SACERS-U). This evaluator is learning how to use the Environment Rating Scale so that they can provide further mentoring/coaching services to Early Childcare programs around the state. Because they are learning how to use the rating scale, there will be more talking between the evaluators than you would have with a normal observation (e.g., Colorado Shines observation). These conversations will be about things they need to look for, not about what the caregiver is doing. Also, because this is an observation used for training purposes and not for a Colorado Shines rating, please feel free to ask the evaluators questions after the observation is over. Our goal is to make everyone feel as comfortable as possible so please also let us know if you have any concerns about the observation.

**Evaluator Protocol:** To complete the rating scale observation, evaluators must look through any cabinets, cupboards, doors, or containers that are accessible to the children. If these are locked, it does not need to be opened. The intent of viewing these areas is to identify any safety hazards and to assess what is accessible to children. Although children may not be allowed in the kitchen or bedroom, if they can access it easily (e.g., it is not blocked off or does not have a child-proofed doorknob), the evaluators will need to look in this area. If it is a bedroom (FCCERS-R observations), evaluators will only do a peripheral look around the room for any visible safety hazards, such as uncovered outlets. They will not be going through drawers in a bedroom. Evaluators will ask for permission to look through these areas at the beginning of the visit.

Evaluators are asked not to speak to staff when they are busy with the children. However, there are many follow up questions that must be answered by staff. A time should be set aside after the observation to go through these questions.

## CLAYTON EARLY LEARNING

Evaluators need to observe *everything* in the environment. Evaluators will need to move around the care giving areas throughout the observation time. This includes viewing sanitary practices during the children's diapering/toileting times.

Birthdates for the oldest and youngest children are needed; however, the names are not necessary. The evaluator will also need to know the number of children in care with identified special needs (e.g., those who have an IEP or IFSP/are receiving services). We do not need the name of the child, but we do need to know the nature of the disability.

**Caregiver Rights:** Again, do not hesitate to ask the evaluator questions. Although there is no way to determine scores during the observation time, feel free to ask the evaluator questions about the process when the observation concludes. This should be a positive process if you have concerns with an evaluator please contact \_\_\_\_\_.